

SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION
OFFICE OF BUSINESS
DEVELOPMENT &
SPECIAL PROGRAMS

DBE NEWSLINE

Your Highway To Success

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

NOVEMBER 2009

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **ARRA**
- **SPOTLIGHT'S
ON YOU**
- **NEWLY
CERTIFIED
FIRMS**
- **MENTOR
PROTEGE**
- **DBE
LIAISON**

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The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)

On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed into law the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). South Carolina was allocated approximately \$463 million for bridges and highways, 30% of which must be sub-allocated to local areas and 3% which must be used for enhancements. South Carolina was also allocated approximately \$41 million for mass transit, of which approximately \$25 million is allocated directly to the urban areas of the state. Distribution of allocated projects includes:

- \$150M in resurfacing projects, to be divided among the 46 counties based on the number of eligible roads in each county
- \$56M for bridge replacement projects
- \$19M for safety improvement projects
- \$74M for interstate maintenance projects
- \$14M for enhancement projects, to be divided evenly among the seven engineering districts for sidewalk projects
- \$150M for local projects, \$44M to be used on projects selected by the Transportation Management Areas (as required by law) and \$106M to be divided equally among

Congressional Districts

- \$8M in mass transit funds for rural facilities
- \$6.7M for rural vehicle replacements
- \$1.8M for a rural virtual transit enterprise (vehicle locator services)

SCDOT is committed to ensuring there are ample DBE firms available to have work opportunities on the highway construction projects and encourages firms that are currently certified or seeking to participate.



Congratulations to DBEs working on ARRA Projects!

Sixty-eighty (68) DBE firms have been committed to ARRA projects totaling approximately \$28 million dollars as of October 2009.

ARRA Bonding Assistance Reimbursement Fee Program (BAP)

The Bonding Assistance program, made available under ARRA, is now available. This new program, which will be administered by the US Department of Transportation's Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU), allows small and disadvantaged businesses to apply for reimbursement on bonding premiums and fees incurred when competing for, or performing on, transportation infrastructure projects funded by ARRA. The program will be especially helpful for businesses with traditionally less working capital than larger

contractors.

Under the BAP program, DBEs performing on a transportation and infrastructure projects receiving ARRA funding assistance from any USDOT mode of transportation will receive financial bonding assistance in the form of bonding fee cost reimbursement. This provision is applicable to a subcontract or prime contract at any tier in the construction project.

Under this program, USDOT will directly reimburse DBEs the premiums paid to the surety company for performance, payment or bid/proposal bonds. The range of the premium

fee is between 1%-3% of the total bond amount. In the event the DBE also obtains a bond guarantee from Small Business Administration's (SBA) Surety Bond Guarantee Program (SBGP), the USDOT will also reimburse the DBE for the small business concern (principal) fee of .729% of the contract price. Only qualified bonds obtained from August 28, 2009 to September 8, 2010 are eligible. For additional information, please go to <http://www.dot.gov/recovery/ost/osdbu/> or contact Steve Smith at (803) 737-6396 or smithsp@scdot.org with your questions.



Dr. Arlene Prince
Director, Business
Development &
Special Programs

*If you have any
 suggestions for
 consideration or
 comments for
 sharing, we would
 like to hear from
 you.*

Director's Corner

Greetings to you from me and my staff!

Welcome to the first edition of the "DBE Newslite" newsletter.

DBE Newslite is a publication of SCDOT's Office of Business Development and Special Programs. Initially, this newsletter will be published twice a year with the purpose of communicating information of interest to our stakeholders. As we receive feedback from you, publications may become more frequent.

With approximately 650 firms participating in the SC Unified Certification Program (UCP), we believe the newsletter will be an invaluable source of information.

In this edition, we've

featured several new initiatives, business related suggestions and information designed to strengthen the skills of DBE firms. As you can see on the cover page, details relating to the American Recovery Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and Bonding Assistance Reimbursable Fee Program (BAP) have been provided. Additionally, we are showcasing several firms who will share with you their thoughts on how to become successful when doing business with SCDOT.

SCDOT is committed to the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program. The Office of Business Development and Special Program is proud of its supportive service programs designed to assist firms with

removing barriers and to compete not only on SCDOT projects, but be successful in the marketplace outside of the DBE program.

You are encouraged to use this communication mechanism to stay abreast of recent developments and as a practical reference in acquiring knowledge about potential avenues available for small, economically and socially disadvantaged businesses. We hope you will find this edition very informative and welcome feedback from our readers.

If you have any suggestions for consideration or comments for sharing, we would like to hear from you.

Happy Reading!!!

Arlene Prince

Business Development Center

The department's Business Development Center (BDC) is a vital part of the Office of Business Development & Special Programs. BDC was established to provide programs and services to DBE firms certified through the Unified Certification Program (UCP) in South Carolina. In partnership with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), staff members are dedicated to help firms become

more competitive in the transportation industry.

The following program initiatives are designed to help increase participation in SCDOT's pre-construction & construction programs, as well as to provide business development skills for all certified business firms. A highly skilled and experienced staff provides assistance in business management, financial & loan, bonding, marketing,

education & training, professional development, highway contracting and onsite technical assistance. Special program initiatives include legal assistance, training tuition assistance, an Entrepreneurial Development Institute (EDI), a Business Development Academy and a Mentor Protégé Program. For more information, go to <http://www.scdot.org/doing/> or call (803) 737-6426.

Mid-Year Reminder To All DBEs

Be sure you have completed your annual prime contractor prequalification renewal. Remember, you will be unable to bid directly on a construction contract if you have not been prequalified by the SCDOT Construction Data Support Office or if your Prequalification Certificate has not been renewed. Call the SCDOT Construction Data Support Office at (803) 737-1434 or (803) 737-6030 for and questions about prequalification and contractor performance evaluations.

Also, make sure your DBE certification is

current. Renewal information must be submitted to the Office of Business Development and Special Programs each year.

Please make a note; the Prime Contractor Prequalification and DBE Certification are separate processes.

To obtain forms and information, go to the following websites:

For prequalification:

<http://www.scdot.org/doing/prequalified.shtml>

Bonding

Many firms have difficulty identifying resources that are available to them for bonding. Additionally, they have difficulty obtaining bonding. As a part of the supportive service initiatives, bonding assistance has been designed to educate DBEs about surety bonds and to assist them in becoming bondable. Firms will be provided assistance with identifying resources available for bonding and/or increasing bond capacity. Also, there will be opportunities for outreach and networking to enhance a firm's

ability to obtain surety bonds.

Firms seeking a bank loan or line of credit are advised that a good credit history is one of the most important requirements in obtaining bonding. Risk assessment stands out as one of the determining factors in the decision making process. If there are any "negatives" that appear on a business or personal credit report, they must be corrected and histories updated as to allow for a true picture of the credit worthiness of the business or business owner. The Business

Development Center staff is available to assist DBE firms, when necessary, in identifying ways that firms can get a better handle on clearing past financial issues that may impede their ability to be bonded and obtain SCDOT work.

Bonding assistance has been designed to educate DBEs about surety bonds and to assist them in becoming bondable.



DBE Liaison

In the office of Business Development and Special Programs, James Cooper functions as a statewide lead technical advisor on construction projects for DBE firms. Cooper has been in this position since January 2007. Cooper is responsible for minimizing constraints and barriers encountered by DBE firms while they are performing work on SCDOT contracts by facilitating positive communication between SCDOT, Prime Contractors and DBE Sub-Contractors.

The DBE Liaison provides hands-on management assistance by coordinating with various departmental sections to ensure early and ongoing technical assistance is given to DBE firms. Additionally, Cooper provides technical information to DBE firms engaged in construction projects to ensure quality

performance.

Cooper works diligently to investigate and resolve onsite complaints relevant to projects with DBE goals. When necessary, he provides translation and interpretive services to fulfill Limited English Proficiency (LEP) requirements.

Since being placed in this position, Cooper has done an excellent job dealing with DBEs, as well as District and Headquarters personnel. If you are a UCP certified DBE, have a contract with SCDOT and need technical assistance, feel free to contact James Cooper at (803) 737-6429.



James Cooper

Cooper is responsible for minimizing constraints and barriers encountered by DBE firms while they are performing work on SCDOT contracts by facilitating positive communication between SCDOT Prime Contractors and DBE Sub-Contractors.



The Spotlight's On You

Q & Q Construction, Inc.



Paul Quiller

Paul Quiller has been self-employed for approximately 20 years running a highway construction company specializing in pipe laying, grading, sidewalk concrete, curb & gutter. Additionally, Quiller does retainer walls and other related work.

The Aiken county native has an associates degree in business and has worked for Textile Industries, and been employed with Southern Bell from 1973 until retirement in 1989. During his tenure, he functioned as a lineman cable splicer to an assistant manager and then spent twelve (12) years on the Savannah River site for Southern Construction. Upon retirement, Quiller stated he "just had an urge to get into business." Quiller's father was a contractor, so this was a natural step for him.

Quiller has been with the DBE program since 1995, and states that he saw the program as a "good way to get a steady flow of work." In the last 18 months, he has become a prime contractor. He states the advantages of the program have been his ability to acquire work for him and his 6-15 crew members.

Quiller desires to become a stronger prime contractor, who is

able to keep a moderate amount of work, consistently employing 10-15 persons and being in the position to bid jobs estimated at \$2 million - \$3 million dollars. Quiller states that due to the SCDOT Supportive Services program he is realizing his dream because he "knows what is going on and what is available."

Quiller credits his success to his understanding of the work and gaining the necessary experience in the field. Quiller emphasizes the importance of obeying safety rules. Just last year, he had five projects in Orangeburg and states that it is "very important to plan- a lot of planning." He states you "must have enough capital to work through the jobs." Also, Quiller states that "communication is essential, making sure you not only communicate with the individuals you work for, but also, with those who work for you." He also stresses "as a firm, you must do the work correctly the first time."

Quiller encourages firms seeking to do business with SCDOT to "become more knowledgeable about the department. Know what the expectations are, the type of people and equipment that you will need. You have to communicate." He states one of the best ways to do this is to "attend SCDOT sponsored training programs and take advantage of the Lead Technical Liaison designated to assist firms on the job due to his knowledge of the inner workings of the department, so that expectations can be made."

Medina's Hauling, Inc.

Aaron Medina comes from a family that has been in the construction business for approximately 40 years. Continuing a strong family tradition, Medina and brother Brando opened Medina's Hauling, Inc. in Greenville, SC during 1999. The business consisted of working with local and nationally owned builders. Taking full advantage of this market, Medina branched out to Columbia and Charleston. Eventually, Medina expanded to the area of construction and became a prime contractor during 2008.

Medina's Hauling, Inc. specializes in commercial construction, erosion control, and construction clean up. In 2005, Medina patented a plastic waste removal container. Medina is Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) certified to recycle materials, such as wood, metals and plywood, taking them to material recovery facilities.

Medina's goal is to "stay in business and grow with SCDOT." He notes, "commercial work is more difficult and inconsistent; however, SCDOT is consistent." Medina indicated that he doesn't want his firm to

"outgrow" itself and he wants to take care of the customers. He feels this can be accomplished by having a smaller customer base. This is what led him to seek DBE certification for his company.

Are you seeking to become successful with SCDOT? Medina suggests that you take advantage of program initiatives offered, which have taught him skills such as organization, time management and how to be more professional. Medina highly recommends the training, marketing, bonding initiatives provided by the Business Center. He attributes current success with his ability to obtain bonding through the assistance of the BDC staff, as well as the marketing initiatives, which give him the opportunity to be more visible.

Medina suggests that DBE firm owners "be patient, don't look back but look forward. Be more professional and exhibit more professionalism." Medina states, "once you have that window of opportunity, you have to take it."



Aaron Medina



Andrew Williams

Andrew Williams Concrete Finishing, Inc.

Andrew Williams comes from a large family being one of 11 children. You can see why he thinks in "big" proportions. Williams decided after high school he "wanted to get out and make some money." And so, he did. He has been self-employed since 1976 when he and a partner opened Williams and Mosley, a concrete business. Subsequently, Williams ventured out on his own in 1987 to create Andrew Williams Concrete Finishing, Inc., a multi-faceted business specializing in concrete, curb and gutter, sidewalks, pipe and dirt hauling.

Williams shared it has not always been easy as business slowed down in 2007. After receiving a bid letting notice from the BDC, he began to make inquiries into the department projects. Additionally, Williams indicated that he was not very familiar with the supportive services provided by SCDOT. However, he decided to learn more about the

program and services, concentrating on the bidding process, which resulted in his being awarded several set-aside projects.

Williams notes the department training programs, especially the traffic zone session, have assisted not only him, but also his employees in becoming more proficient.

Williams feels that firms looking to be successful with SCDOT should first and foremost become familiar with how the department does business, which means "learning to listen and not be hard headed." Williams says he's been contacted by more general contractors because of his contract awards. He has found, "the ultimate success of working as an SCDOT DBE is when a prime contractor comes to him with an offer to be a member of their team when there is no DBE participation requirement. That tells me they are considering us based on our reputation, our work and our integrity!"

A-Squared Consulting, LLC

A-Squared Consulting, LLC owner Christel Allen wanted to be a professional photographer earning an associate of arts degree from DeKalb Community College. Photography freelancing for five (5) years, Allen won "Photo of the Year" in 1994.

Allen stated "marketing and selling come natural; it's innate." Capitalizing on this while working at Triplett King and Associates, she developed proposals as well as being responsible for marketing and business development. In the back of her mind, Allen knew she wanted a family, a career and her own business. Determined she could have both a family and a career, sheer determination translated into her starting her own business in 2008.

A-Squared Consulting, LLC specializes in community relations, proposal development, employee development, facilitation, scheduling, document control, marketing, event planning, risk management and OSHA compliance training. Allen has prepared firm proposals to include forensic studies. Her ultimate goal is to employ 6-10 staffers offering flex time and benefits, extending her company's charitable contributions to the community by offering CPR/first aid training and creating logos for special groups with charitable/community based orientations.

Allen's current goal is to obtain the safety and public relations piece on the department's I-73 project. Being an artist at heart, she sees "roads and bridges as art and projects that link families and memories." She felt that being a part of the DBE

program would allow opportunities for her firm to be a part of the department's initiatives. Allen was recently awarded a procurement contract for the "Transportation Careers Training Program," which is designed to prepare unemployed, underemployed, minorities, females, and other economically disadvantaged individuals for employment opportunities in the commercial trucking industry and other fields in the transportation/construction industry. Counties with higher unemployment rates will be targeted for this project.

Allen's advice to firms is to take advantage of programs such as the Entrepreneurial Development Institute (EDI) offered through the business development program. She feels that programs offered by the Business Development Center (BDC) and staff assistance have given her the opportunity to "move beyond the 'mom and pop' type business, moving them to a more professional level."

Since becoming a part of the program and taking advantage of the services offered, Allen has opened a satellite office in Myrtle Beach only 18 months after starting her business. Allen suggests that firms use the DBE status to "get your foot in the door, a stepping stone." She encourages firms to remember that "attitude is everything." Allen suggests that firms "utilize every BDC resource, because there is always and opportunity to learn." She finally recommends that "firms be proactive and network, make calls." Allen believes you have to be "aggressive and chase work."



Christel Allen

Here's your chance to bid

In July 2009, SCDOT began to let projects, to include ARRA projects. The majority of the projects consist of sidewalk, curb/gutter and handicap ramps totaling approximately \$14 million. The anticipated DBE goals are anywhere from 20%-50%. These goals have been set with the intention of boosting DBE

participation. Thirteen (13) projects have been let with approximately \$1,861,000 in DBE commitments. An additional nineteen (19) jobs are scheduled to be let through December 2009.

Don't miss out on this great opportunity to bid work as a prime or a subcontractor!

What's New?

A new initiative that you all have been awaiting is currently being implemented by the agency. The SCDOT Mentor Protégé Program (MPP) was initiated in May 2009. Informative introduction meetings were held in various locations throughout the state during the months of May and June.

MPP was created to establish a link between businesses certified under the South Carolina Unified Certification Program (UCP) with successful professional service providers and general contractors.

Interested Mentors and Protégés may submit either a "Mentor Interest Application" or a "Protégé Application"

to notify SCDOT of their willingness to participate in the program.

Mentors who are prime contractors must be pre-qualified with SCDOT and have a minimum Contractor Performance Score (CPS) score of 75 and above; a professional services firm that desires to be a mentor must be in "good standing with SCDOT".

Protégés selected to participate in the MPP must be:

- Considered in good standing with SCDOT and the DBE program.
- Certified for a minimum of two (2) years, and their annual updates must be current with all required documentation.

- Not in delinquency or default of any contract or service.

- Participated in SCDOT transportation construction/engineering projects, or have submitted bids/quotes within the last eighteen months.

- Attended a minimum of three (3) SCDOT training sessions in the last two (2) years or some other approved training by SCDOT.

If you would like additional information on the Mentor Protégé Program, contact Curtis Sims, Jr. at (803) 737-6427 or go to <http://www.scdot.org/doing/> and look for the MPP under the Office of Business Development and Special Programs.

New Kids On The Block

Welcome to the most recent firms joining the Disadvantaged Business Enterprises program:

Artistic Concrete of GA, Inc. (Joe Hall)

Concrete construction, masonry, and grading, commercial and institutional building construction, structural steel and precast concrete

Better Bookkeeping Solutions (Judith Miller)

Payroll services, Tax Preparation services, and other Accounting services

DE & DE Hauling (Salina Bethea)

Hauling (1)

Delco, Inc. (Dayle Bailey)

Hauling (9)

ED RUSH Development Firm, LLC (Keena Edwards)

Real Estate Development, Land Acquisition, Project Consulting, Construction Consulting, and Right of Way Acquisition

Father & Son Brokerage (Harold Hall)

Commodity Contracts Brokerage (Freight Brokerage)

Global-5, Inc. (Mary Hamill)

Public Relation Services, Marketing & Communications

HHS Trucking, LLC (Harold Hall)

General Freight Trucking (local and long distance)

KAS, LLC of NC (Karen Streeter)

Distribution of ADA approved detectable warning systems

Law Office of Leah B. Moody, LLC (Leah Moody)

Legal Services

Midge Creek Trucking (Martha Church)

Hauling (1)

Surveillance Resources & Investigations, LLC

(Roderick L. Watts)

Security and investigations services

Unison Consulting, Inc. (Yovette L. Drake)

Information technology (non-consultant)

Urban GIS, Inc. (Keith Searles)

Consultant Geophysical Information Systems (GIS), Urban Planning, Project Management

V. West Contracting and Consulting Services, Inc.

(Vernell West)

Workforce and small business consulting; Public infrastructure programs for utilization of disadvantaged groups

Looking to Market Your Business?

Does your business need a new logo? Are you just starting and need business cards? Does your letterhead need a "makeover"? Look no further.

SCDOT offers marketing assistance to UCP certified DBE firms in good standing. A program has been designed to help with the development and implementation of marketing plans by identifying strategies, products, services and goals to reach the targeted audience. A marketing specialist will work one-on-one with a DBE firm to assist with creating practical plans and materials for use as networking and advertising tools. Also, firms will learn how to use and present marketing tools effectively through training programs such as "Marketing as a DBE."

Why market? Marketing strategies and activities result in making products available that will satisfy customers and ultimately bring in a profit. In other words, business owners must learn that they must attract and retain a growing

satisfied customer base.

Several DBE firms have taken advantage of this program. William Brown, owner of Palmetto Traffic Data Services, LLC a firm specializing in traffic data collections, commented, "I just want to take a moment to say thank you so very much for the marketing materials. They are more than I could ask for. They look great. I am very pleased and I am looking forward to working with these."

Owner Andrew White, "Pop's Lawn Maintenance Services," specializing in lawn maintenance, seeding, sodding, tree trimming and landscaping services, comments, "I have gotten more business from my customers being impressed with the professionalism of the brochure than I have gotten from any of the other services offered. Again, thanks."

Join the numerous firms who have taken advantage of the marketing assistance program. If you feel your business needs a "little nudge," why are you waiting? Contact Paula Hollis at (803) 737-1663 or hollispc@scdot.org for your marketing needs.

In The Know

- BDC provides bid/estimating assistance. On the day of a letting, you can attend the bidding process.

- You may be eligible for up to \$1500 in training tuition assistance reimbursements. South Carolina based DBE firms who have been on the South Carolina UCP directory list for the last (2) two years, are in good standing and have attended at least two (2) SCDOT sponsored training events may be eligible for DBE Training Tuition Assistance (TTA).

Take advantage of this cost effective opportunity by developing your skill levels and improving job-related or career-related capabilities by enhancing your firm's capacity. Don't let this growth opportunity pass you by. "Knowledge is strength." Are you interested? Please contact Paula Hollis, Business Assistance Manager, at (803) 737-1663 or go to:

<http://www.scdot.org/doing/> for policy and submission forms.

Procurement Opportunities

From time to time, procurement opportunities become available in the areas of sidewalk installation and other concrete work, vegetation management within the rights of way (mowing and limb trimming), tree removal within the rights of way, janitorial services, clearing and grubbing, fence installation, the purchase of many commodities, hauling, HVAC installation and repair, catch basin repair and renovation. For more information and to view available opportunities go to:

<http://www.dot.state.sc.us/doing/procurement/bids.asp>.

"South Carolina Business Opportunities" (SCBO)

The official State bi-weekly publication announces proposed procurements of construction, information technology, supplies, services and other information of interest to the business community. This publication is offered through the Internet at www.State.SC.US/MMO/SCBO. Please note, all procurements over \$10,000 must be advertised in SCBO.

FFY 2010 DBE Goals

Thanks to the many participants who made the "World Café" style Public Consultation Meetings held last spring in Greenville, Charleston and Columbia SC a great success. Sixty (60) firms and other organizations provided quality information relating to their knowledge of the availability of disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged business, as well as barriers that impede their ability to be successful in obtaining work with SCDOT. The department detailed its efforts to establish a level playing field for DBEs to include information relating to the supportive services program. Subsequently, information gathered from participants was taken into consideration as the FFY 2010 DBE goals were established.

SCDOT has established its DBE goals for Federal Fiscal Year 2010 (FFY10) at 11% for new contracts, with 3.5% to be obtained through race-neutral means and the remaining 7.5% through race-conscious means. Information relating to the goals is located on the website at www.scdot.org.

A Quick Tip for QuickBooks (QB)

Working too hard and have too many windows open? Snap windows shut in a hurry!

Go to menu bar and click "window", then "close all". All windows will close in an instant. (Don't worry! QuickBooks will ask you if you want to save transactions in progress. Just click yes!)

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Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

This Act declares that no person in the United States shall be excluded from participation in or otherwise discriminated against on the ground of race, color, or national origin under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

For information relating to the SCDOT Title VI Complaint Procedure go to

http://www.scdot.org/doing/title_VI.shtml

or contact Alex Nelson, Title VI Coordinator at (803) 737-1664 or nelsona@scdot.org.

Fraud and Ethics Hotline

1-800-551-3915

The Fraud and Ethics Hotline allows anyone to report potentially fraudulent activity about a program administered by the agency. Anonymous information is accepted. If you choose to provide your name, it will be kept confidential to the fullest extent allowed by law.

Upcoming Training Events

December 9, 2009

“DBE Orientation”

Columbia, South Carolina

Keep and eye out for upcoming information on EDI 2010!

For details and registration information, contact Amy Lewis at (803) 737-6426 or lewisam@scdot.org.

Food for Thought

Know your secret to success: Seize the moment when opportunity comes!



Tell Us What You Think

We welcome your feedback.
Send your comments or inquiries
to

Paula Hollis, BDC Business Assistance Manager, at
www.hollispc@scdot.org
or mail to:

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